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普通高等教育“十二五”规划教材



大学英语 快速阅读

3

(第三版)

College English
Fast Reading

总主编 李正栓



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PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

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总主编 李正栓

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前言

《大学英语快速阅读》(3)为北京大学出版社出版的“大学英语立体化网络化系列教材”之一。共精选短文24篇,内容涉及中西文化、语言、教育、生活、媒介、科技、人性、哲学等,按主题分为8个单元。本教材突出选文的科学性、可读性和趣味性,阅读内容丰富、有趣、时尚;所有选材均为原汁原味的佳作,语言地道,表达准确。

本教材旨在帮助读者扩大英语词汇量,提高阅读速度和阅读理解能力,广泛深入地了解有关历史、文化、风俗、人情以及自然科学和人文科学方面的知识。本教材着重培养学生英语快速阅读策略和技巧的运用,通过本教材系统、科学的强化训练,学员的英语快速阅读水平可在较短时间内得到大幅度提高。

本教材根据国家颁布的《大学英语课程教学要求》关于大学英语四六级学生的快速阅读速度要求和《关于试点阶段的大学英语四级考试说明》设计单元练习,每个单元配有与学习内容相关的练习题。

本教程适合我国高校非英语专业大学二年级开设快速英语阅读课使用,也可作为四六级英语阅读强化班的培训教材,同时也适合参加托福、GRE、雅思、考研等各种英语考试的广大考生学习使用。

由于编者水平和时间所限,难免还有不足之处,敬请广大读者批评指正。

编者



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Unit 1

Passage 1 (Time Required: 5' 34")

The English Character

Vocabulary Tips

reserved *adj.* 矜持寡言的

wit *n.* 智者

breathtaking *adj.* 令人兴奋的

commuter *n.* 通勤者

compartment *n.* 列车车厢

understatement *n.* 轻描淡写的陈述

Starting Time _____ Finishing Time _____

The English, as a race, have the reputation of being very different from all other nationalities, including their closest neighbors, the French, Belgians and Dutch. It is claimed that living on an island separated from the rest of Europe has much to do with it. Whatever the reasons, it may be fairly stated that the Englishman has developed many attitudes and habits which distinguish him from other nationalities.

Broadly speaking, the Englishman is a quiet, shy, reserved person who is fully relaxed only among people he knows well. In the presence of strangers or foreigners he often seems uneasy, even embarrassed. You have only to witness a commuter train any morning or evening to see the truth of this. Serious-looking businessmen and women sit reading their newspapers or having a light sleep in a corner; no one speaks. In fact, to do so would seem most unusual. An English wit, pretending to be giving advice to overseas visitors, once suggested, "On entering a railway compartment shake hands with all the passengers." Needless to say, he was not being serious. There is an unwritten but clearly understood code of behavior which, if broken, makes the person immediately the object of suspicion.

In many parts of the world it is quite normal to show frank extremes of enthusiasm, emotion, passion, etc., often accompanied by appropriate gestures. The Englishman is somewhat different. Of course, an Englishman feels no less deeply than any other nationality, but he tends to display his feelings far less. This is reflected in his use of language. Imagine a man commenting on the great beauty of a young girl. Whereas a man of a more emotional nature might describe her as "a priceless jewel," "extremely beautiful" or "precious," the Englishman will flatly state "Um, she's all right." An Englishman who

has seen a highly successful and enjoyable film recommends it to a friend by commenting: "It's not bad, you know." Or on seeing a breathtaking landscape he might show his pleasure by saying: "Nice, yes, very nice." The overseas visitor must not be disappointed by this apparent lack of interest and involvement; he must realize that "all right," "not bad," and "nice," are very often used as superlatives with the sense of "first-class," "excellent," "beautiful." This special use of language, particularly common in English, is known as understatement.

(391 words)

Comprehension Exercises

For the first seven questions, choose the best answer from the four choices. For the last three questions, complete the sentences with the information given in the passage.

1. According to the first paragraph, what probably makes the Englishman very different from people in the rest of Europe?
 - A. The way they speak.
 - B. Their customs and culture.
 - C. living on an island separated from the rest of Europe.
 - D. Their naturally reserved manner.
2. How does an Englishman feel among people he knows well?
 - A. Uneasy.
 - B. Relaxed.
 - C. Embarrassed.
 - D. Uncomfortable.
3. What do the English businessmen and women do when they sit in the commuter train?
 - A. They talk frankly to each other.
 - B. They shake hands, and then have a light sleep in a corner.
 - C. They sit reading their newspapers.
 - D. They talk to each other with appropriate gestures.
4. From the passage we can infer that the Englishman is different from other nationalities mainly in _____.
 - A. taste
 - B. character
 - C. the principle of behavior
 - D. all aspects
5. If one doesn't want to be suspected in public, he had better _____.
 - A. behave relaxed
 - B. shake hands with all people he meets
 - C. talk with others
 - D. keep quiet

6. An Englishman's saying "all right" usually has the sense of _____.
A. "not bad"
B. "quite right"
C. "fairly good"
D. "very good"
7. The understatement in the English language shows that the Englishman _____.
A. lacks deep feelings
B. tends to display his feelings far less
C. has no passion or emotion
D. is indifferent
8. The Englishman has developed many attitudes and habits which _____ him from other nationalities.
9. In many places of the world it is very normal to show frank extremes of _____, _____, etc., often accompanied by appropriate gestures.
10. The visitors from foreign countries must not be disappointed by this apparent lack of interest and _____.

Passage 2 (Time Required: 6' 14")**I'm Sorry, I Won't Apologize****Vocabulary Tips**

managing partner 主要股东

lobby *vi.* 游说; 进行疏通活动grin *vi.* 咧嘴笑sue *vt.* 起诉; 对……提起诉讼given *prep.* 考虑到resignation *n.* 辞职; 放弃humiliate *vt.* 羞辱, 使蒙受耻辱furious *adj.* 暴怒的

Starting Time _____

Finishing Time _____

Almost daily, news reports include accounts of public figures or heads of companies being forced to say they're sorry. In a recent case, Marge Schott, managing partner of the Cincinnati Reds, at first did not want to apologize for her remark that Hitler "was good at the beginning but he just went too far." Under pressure, she finally said that she regretted her remarks "offended many people." Predictably and especially given her history with such comments, many were not satisfied with this response and successfully lobbied for her resignation.

This particular use of "I'm sorry" sounds familiar. The other day my husband said to me, "I'm sorry I hurt your feelings." I knew he was really trying. He has learned, through our years together, that apologies are important to me. But he was grinning, because he also knew that "I'm sorry I hurt your feelings" left open to the possibility indeed, strongly suggested that he regretted not what he did but my emotional reaction. It sometimes seems that he thinks the earth will open up and swallow him if he admits fault.

It may appear that insisting someone admit fault is like wanting him to humiliate himself. But I don't see it that way, since it's no big deal for me to say I made a mistake and apologize. The problem is that it becomes a big deal when he won't.

This turns out to be similar to the Japanese view. Following a car accident, according to a Times article, the Japanese typically get out of their cars and bow, each claiming responsibility. In contrast, Americans are instructed by their insurance companies to avoid admitting fault. When an American living in Japan did just that—even though he knew he was to blame the Japanese driver "was so angry by the American's failure to show deep sorrow that he took the highly unusual step of suing him."

The Japanese driver and I are not the only ones who are offended when someone obviously at fault doesn't just admit it and apologize. A woman who lives in the country

told me of a similar reaction. One day she gave her husband something to mail when he went into town. She stressed that it was essential the letter be mailed that day, and he assured her it would. But the next day, when they left the house together, she found her unmailed letter in the car. He said, "Oh, I forgot to mail your letter." She was furious—not because he had forgotten, but because he didn't apologize.

(427 words)

Comprehension Exercises

For the first seven questions, choose the best answer from the four choices. For the last three questions, complete the sentences with the information given in the passage.

1. Why did Marge Schott resign her position?
 - A. Because no one was satisfied with her remark.
 - B. Because she offended many people.
 - C. Because she admitted her fault.
 - D. Because she did not want to apologize for her remark.
2. The author felt her husband regretted _____.
 - A. not what he did but her emotional response
 - B. for what he did
 - C. for not making apologies
 - D. for not admitting fault
3. It may appear that insisting someone admit fault is like _____.
 - A. hurting his feelings
 - B. making a big deal
 - C. wanting him to humiliate himself
 - D. being swallowed up by the earth
4. _____ are instructed by their insurance companies to avoid admitting fault.
 - A. Public figures or heads of companies
 - B. Both Americans and Japanese
 - C. Americans
 - D. Japanese
5. According to the author, when one makes a mistake, he should _____.
 - A. admit it and apologize
 - B. avoid admitting it
 - C. explain it away
 - D. make every effort to save his face
6. According to the passage, what would Japanese drivers usually do after a car accident?
 - A. They would admit their own faults.
 - B. They would blame each other.

- C. They would avoid admitting faults.
D. They would sue each other.
7. What was the woman angry about?
A. Her husband's failure to mail the letter.
B. Her husband's failure to go into town.
C. Her husband's failure to apologize.
D. Her husband's failure to leave the house together with her.
8. My husband also knew that "I'm sorry I hurt your feelings" left open to the _____
_____ indeed.
9. Many people were not satisfied with Marge Schott's response and successfully _____
_____.
10. The Japanese driver and I are not the only ones who _____ when
someone obviously at fault doesn't just admit it and apologize.

Passage 3 (Time Required: 15' 00")

Japanese and American Workers: Two Casts of Mind

Vocabulary Tips

novel adj. 新奇的

incentive *n.* 动机; 刺激

forelady *n.* 女工头

enterprise *n.* 企业; 事业

approach *n.* 方法, 途径

appraisal *n.* 评价; 估价

bonus *n.* 奖金; 红利

illustrate *v.* 举例说明

Starting Time _____ Finishing Time _____

For westerners, it's difficult to understand the Japanese commitment to collective values. Let me illustrate with an anecdote about a new factory in Japan owned and operated by an American electronics company. The American company, a particularly creative firm, frequently attracts attention within business community for its novel approaches to planning, organizational design, and management systems. As a consequence of this corporate style, the parent company determined to make a thorough study of Japanese workers and to design a plant that would combine the best of East and West. In their study they discovered that Japanese firms almost never make use of individual work incentives, such as piecework or even individual performance appraisal tied to salary increases. They concluded that rewarding individual achievement and ability is always a good thing.

In the final assembly area of their new plant, long lines of young Japanese women wired together electronic products on a piece rate system: the more you wired, the more you got paid. About two months after opening, the head foreladies approached the plant manager. "Honorable plant manager," they said humbly as they bowed, "we are embarrassed to be so forward, but we must speak to you because all of the girls have threatened to quit work this Friday." "Why," they wanted to know. The foreladies answered: "Can't our plant have the same compensation system as other Japanese companies? When you hire a new girl, her starting wage should be fixed by her age. Every year on her birthday, she should receive an automatic increase in pay. The idea that any of us can be more productive than another must be wrong, because none of us in final assembly could

make a thing unless all of the other people in the plant had done their jobs right first. To single one person out as being more productive is wrong and is also personally humiliating to us." The company changed its compensation system to the Japanese model.

Another American company in Japan had installed a suggestion system much as we have in the United States. Individual workers were encouraged to place suggestions to improve productivity into special boxes. For an accepted idea the individual received a bonus amounting to some fraction of the productivity savings realized from his or her suggestion. After a period of six months, not a single suggestion had been submitted. The American managers were puzzled.

The managers asked why the suggestion system had not been used. The answer: "No one can come up with a work improvement idea alone. We work together, and any ideas that one of us may have are actually developed by watching others and talking to others. If one of us was singled out for being responsible for such an idea, it would embarrass all of us." The company changed to a group suggestion system, in which workers collectively submitted suggestions. Bonuses were paid to groups which would save bonus money until the end of the year for a party at a restaurant or, if there was enough money, for family vacations together. The suggestions and productivity improvements rained down on the plant.

One can interpret these examples in two quite different ways. Perhaps the Japanese commitment to collective values is an anachronism that does not fit with modern industrialism. It does not seem to provide the individual incentive to excel. Entirely apart from its economic effects, collectivism implies a loss of individuality, a loss of the freedom to be different from others.

The second interpretation of the examples is that the Japanese collectivism is economically efficient. It causes people to work well together and to encourage one another to better efforts. Industrial life requires interdependence of one person on another.

In the Japanese mind, collectivism is neither a corporate or individual goal to strive for nor a slogan to pursue. Rather, the nature of things operates so that nothing of consequence occurs as a result of individual effort. A Japanese professor of accounting, a brilliant scholar trained at Carnegie-Mellon University who teaches now in Tokyo, remarked that the status of accounting systems in Japanese industry is primitive compared to those in the United States. Though not at all surprised at the difference in accounting systems, I was not at all sure that the Japanese were primitive. In fact, I thought their system a good deal more efficient than ours.

Most American companies have basically two accounting systems. One system summarizes the overall financial state to inform stockholders, bankers, and other outsiders.